

# Tailored messaging increases understanding of climate change in Republicans

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A team of researchers at Yale University's Yale Program on Climate Change Communication has found that the use of tailored advertising can increase awareness among Republicans of the dangers posed by

climate change. In their paper published in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, the group describes field experiments they conducted with tailored advertising in competitive districts in the U.S. and what they learned from them. Phillip Ehret with the See Change Institute has published a News & Views piece in the same journal issue.

As the planet continues to heat up due to global warming, action by officials in the U.S. to reduce greenhouse emissions has been noticeably lacking. This is due to differences in opinions of elected officials on the nature of global warming—some refuse to believe it is occurring at all—others suggest it is a naturally occurring event and thus there is nothing to be done about it. Such differences in opinions have been found to trend along party lines—Democrats, on the whole, believe in the science behind global warming warnings, while Republicans quite often do not. In this new effort, the researchers have tested the possibility of changing the minds of Republican voters who might theoretically demand their representatives begin voting for efforts to reduce carbon emission initiatives.

The effort by the researchers involved creating videos that featured "credible" personalities who spoke about the impact of [climate change](#) and what it might mean for the future. One example was of a very conservative general speaking about the challenges [global warming](#) presents for national security. The researchers then placed the videos as ads on [social media sites](#) such as YouTube and Facebook. All of the ads were directed specifically at people living in two U.S. voting districts that had been identified as "purple" where there were equal numbers of Republicans and Democrats. The researchers ran the [ad campaign](#) for one month.

Along with the ad campaign, the researchers conducted surveys of 1,600 people living in the targeted districts, asking about their views on climate change—both before and after the ad campaign. They found that the

campaign had increased understanding of the dangers of [climate](#) change in Republicans by several percentage points. They also found that it had convinced many of them that it was due to human activities.

**More information:** Matthew H. Goldberg et al, Shifting Republican views on climate change through targeted advertising, *Nature Climate Change* (2021). [DOI: 10.1038/s41558-021-01070-1](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-021-01070-1)

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